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LETTER DATED 15 APRIL 1994 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BELGIUM TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In view of the Security Council's deliberations on the situation in Rwanda, I have the honour to transmit to you, herewith, a letter dated 15 April 1994 from Mr. Willy Claes, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium addressed to you.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Paul NOTERDAEME
Permanent Representative of
Belgium to the United Nations

Annex

Letter dated 15 April 1994 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium addressed to the President of the Security Council

In his letter of 13 April last (S/1994/430), the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations informed you of the facts and political elements which have prompted the Belgian Government to recommend to the Security Council that the troops of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) be withdrawn, since its mission has become pointless. That recommendation is based on an intimate knowledge of the political and military conditions in the field. I should therefore be grateful to you if the Council could take into consideration the objective nature of the elements which have prompted the Belgian Government to make its recommendation.

All the information at our disposal reinforces our fear that UNAMIR as a whole may be exposed to very serious risks and be powerless in the face of the worsening situation. That is why my Government again recommends that the UNAMIR mission be suspended.

It seems to us futile to hope that a lasting cease-fire will be established in the days to come. The extent of the massacres which UNAMIR has had to witness, without being able to do anything, and the current military imbalance convinces that hostilities will continue, particularly since one of the parties appears to be determined to seize strategic points such as the airport where UNAMIR is currently regrouping. Given the circumstances, the proposal that we should wait five days before choosing one of the three options in question would, in our view, increase the risks to an unacceptable degree.

I take note of the fact that each of the three options proposed to the Council involves the departure of the Belgian contingent. Indeed, as we informed you, I confirm to you that the Belgian Government has decided that the Belgian battalion in UNAMIR will be withdrawn in any event without delay. Aside from the reasons I have just mentioned, Belgian nationals have been and are, as you know, the target of special threats and several of them, including 10 of our soldiers, have lost their lives, making continuation of the Belgian presence impossible.

Enclosed please find a copy of the letter which I sent to the Secretary-General.

(Signed) Willy CLAES

Enclosure

Letter dated 15 April 1994 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium addressed to the Secretary-General

At the informal meeting of the Security Council on 14 April 1994 your representative presented three options for altering the deployment of troops of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda in light of the dramatic developments in the situation in Rwanda and the breakdown of the peace process in that country. I have stated to you directly, on several occasions, the facts and political elements which have prompted the Belgian Government to recommend

- All the information at our disposal reinforces our fear that UNAMIR as a whole may be exposed to very serious risks and be powerless in the face of the worsening situation. That is why my Government again recommends that the UNAMIR mission be suspended.

- It seems to us futile to hope that a lasting cease-fire will be established in the days to come. The extent of the massacres which UNAMIR has had to witness, without being able to do anything, and the current military imbalance convinces that hostilities will continue, particularly since one of the parties appears to be determined to seize strategic points such as the airport where UNAMIR is currently regrouping. Given the circumstances, the proposal that we should wait five days before choosing one of the three options in question would, in our view, increase the risks to an unacceptable degree.

I note that each of the three options proposed to the Council involves the departure of the Belgian contingent. As we informed the President of the Security Council on 13 April 1994, I confirm to you that the Belgian Government has decided that the Belgian battalion in UNAMIR will be withdrawn in any event without delay. Aside from the reasons I have just mentioned, Belgian nationals have been and are, as you know, the target of special threats and several of them, including 10 of our soldiers, have lost their lives, making continuation of the Belgian presence impossible.

I should be grateful if you would instruct the Secretariat and the Commander of UNAMIR to:

(a) release the Belgian contingent immediately;

(b) open discussions immediately regarding the equipment that we would provide to a UNAMIR detachment, should the Security Council decide to maintain one. It goes without saying that we will make every effort to see to it that the foregoing decisions are executed in close coordination with the UNAMIR command.

I am sending copies of this letter to the President and the members of the Security Council and to the troop-contributing countries.

(Signed) Willy CLAES